

BOARD OF INQUIRY INTO THE McCRAE LANDSLIDE

Melissa Burrage

Witness Statement

Prepared for the purpose of a Board of Inquiry

27 June 2025

WITNESS STATEMENT OF MELISSA BURRAGE

Name:	Melissa Burrage
Address:	2 Queen Street, Mornington VIC 3931
Occupation:	Manager – Climate Change and Sustainability – Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
Date:	27 June 2025

1. I make this second witness statement in response to the Request to Produce a Witness Statement dated 11 June 2025 (**Notice**). This statement has been prepared with the assistance of lawyers and Shire officers.
2. This statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I make this statement based on matters within my knowledge and documents and records of the Shire that I have reviewed. I have also used and relied upon data and information produced or provided to me by officers within the Shire.
3. I provide a response in relation to Questions 1 - 4 of the Notice

1. Please consider paragraph 5 of the Witness Statement of Melissa Burrage dated 11 June 2025 which states:

It is my understanding, based on my review of the Shire's records and my cumulative experience while working at the Shire, that the inclinometers the Shire monitors were installed historically as a direct response to locations that had already experienced landslides or showed clear indications (on site) that a landslide was likely to occur.

2. Did the Shire consider installing inclinometers in or around the escarpment in the McCrae area as a direct response to the landslide of approximately 20 tonnes that occurred in November 2022 around the west end of View Point Road?

4. To the best of my understanding, the answer is no.

3. If the answer to question 2 is yes, why did the Shire ultimately decide not to install inclinometers??

5. Not applicable.

4. If the answer to question 2 is no, why not?

6. To the best of my knowledge, and further to my first witness statement of 11 June 2025 at [5], it is my understanding that the inclinometers installed and monitored by the Shire, and which were listed at [\[MSC.5063.0001.0001\]](#), were each installed based on expert opinion that an inclinometer should be installed in that vicinity.
7. In preparing this witness statement I have been shown a copy of David Simon's First Witness Statement of 11 April 2025, which I note at paragraph [113(a)-(f)] set out the expert opinions the Shire was provided after the 2022 Landslide. In preparing this witness statement, I have also been shown a copy of Claudio Flores' witness statement of 22 May 2025, and note Mr Flores sets out the actions he took to prevent or minimise the risk of a further landslide occurring in the vicinity of 10-12 View Point Road at Question 2. To the best of my knowledge, and having reviewed those witness statements and the reports referred to in Mr Simon's First Witness Statement at paragraph [113(a)-(f)], after the 2022 Landslide, the Shire was not provided with any expert opinion that either:
 - (a) the Shire should install inclinometers in the vicinity of the 2022 Landslide; or
 - (b) that the owners of private property within the vicinity of the 2022 Landslide should install inclinometers.
8. In preparing this witness statement I have spoken with Derek Rotter, Director McCrae Landslide Incident, who advises me that if any such expert recommendation would have been made, it would have fallen within the remit of Stantec's reports referred to in Mr Simon's First Witness Statement at 113(a), being [\[MSC.5000.0001.0292\]](#) (**Stantec Report**). Mr Rotter is named in the Stantec Report as the person from the Shire who engaged Stantec to undertake the Stantec Report. Mr Rotter has advised me that he does not recall the Shire requesting advice from Stantec on inclinometers. Mr Rotter advises me that that was not unusual, because inclinometers generally measure slow-moving and sub-surface movement of land, not surface movement of the kind that occurred during the 2022 Landslide. Mr Rotter also advises me that not requesting advice on inclinometers was not unusual, as the 2022 Landslide was understood to have been caused by a combination of a significant rainfall event and the potential failure of an irrigation pipe.
9. To the best of my understanding, for these reasons, the Shire did not consider installing inclinometers in the vicinity of the 2022 Landslide after the 2022 Landslide.
10. I otherwise note Mr Flores' answer to Question 2 in his witness statement of 22 May 2025 which sets out the actions he took to prevent or minimise the risk of a further landslide occurring in the vicinity of 10-12 View Point Road.

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Signed by Melissa Burrage
 on 27 June 2025